

✓ Protecting our food.

I voted **YES** to protect our food supply against “Mad Cow” disease. We banned the use of diseased or “downer” cows and launched a new system to track potentially diseased livestock.



✓ Health care for small business.

To help more small businesses provide health insurance to employees, I sponsored a law that allows small businesses to purchase more affordable health insurance. This law is a good first step on a difficult problem. I voted **YES**.

✓ Investigating job-outsourcing.

Did you know that 36 of 41 state agencies are outsourcing taxpayer-funded work worth millions of dollars to foreign countries? That doesn’t make sense. The House demanded an investigation of why state taxpayers are subsidizing jobs overseas when people need jobs here. I sponsored this bill, and voted **YES**, but it died in the Senate.

✓ Small business incubators.

Big businesses get a lot of breaks. But we should do more to help *small* businesses, which are truly the backbone of our economy and job market. I joined in sponsoring a state “small business incubator program,” similar to a highly successful Tacoma program. Start-up and existing businesses helped by incubator programs have a more than 80% success rate, which means a stronger economy and stronger job growth. I voted **YES**.

✓ Public Works Trust Fund.

Washington needs more good jobs! I’m very happy the Public Works Trust Fund loans I sponsored this year were enacted. These loans will generate more than 11,000 construction-related jobs and more than \$1 billion in economic activity. **YES!**



✓ Performance audits.

I voted **YES** for legislation to require *independent* performance audits of state agency spending and activities. We need performance audits to reduce wasteful spending and make government more accountable for how your tax dollars are spent.

✓ Helping displaced workers.

I’m proud the Legislature passed my bill to make health insurance more affordable for over 6,000 Washington workers who have lost jobs to foreign trade. My legislation enables federal “trade adjustment” funding to be used for Washington’s Basic Health Plan. I voted **YES**. Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler called it “*the most positive piece of health insurance legislation that passed this year.*”

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U. S. POSTAGE PAID
Washington State
Department of Printing

Representative
Dawn Morrell

PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
Printed on recycled paper

**2004
Session
Final
Report**



2004 Session Final Report

Spring 2004

Dear Friends,

It feels good to be home after a very busy 60-day legislative session. It also feels good to know that many of my top priorities for the session were fulfilled. I’m proud the 2004 Legislature:

- Expanded senior property-tax relief to help 40,000 more senior households.
- Saved 22 acres of prime Puyallup farming research land.
- Increased college enrollments by 3,000 students in high demand fields.
- Saved health insurance for 20,000 low-income children.
- Made health insurance available to thousands of unemployed workers.
- Protected millions of dollars of levy funding for Pierce County schools.

These are just a few of the issues we addressed in 2004. More are discussed inside. You’ll also see how I voted on key legislation affecting Washington and our Pierce County communities.

Let me take this opportunity to say a big THANK YOU to the local citizens who helped make this a successful year. Testimony from local citizens helped make the expansion of senior property-tax relief possible, helped save the Puyallup farmland, and inspired much of the legislation I sponsored. I’m proud local voices had a major impact on the Legislature.

I’d love to hear *your* comments and ideas for legislation as I work on ways to improve schools, health care and the jobs climate. So please feel free to call, write or stop by my newly reopened district office at 107 W. Stewart in Puyallup. I look forward to hearing from you, and will never forget that you are the reason why I’m here.

Best wishes always,

Dawn Morrell
Dawn Morrell

Committees:

Health Care -
Vice-Chair
Capital Budget
Higher Education

Olympia office:

PO Box 40600
332 John L. O’Brien Bldg.
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
(360) 786-7968

District office:

107 West Stewart
Puyallup, WA
(253) 840-4604

E-mail: morrell_da@leg.wa.gov

✓ Senior property-tax relief.

We won! We made about 40,000 more senior households eligible for senior property-tax relief. Our new law raises the income ceiling for tax-relief from \$30,000 to \$35,000 and allows deductions for Medicare insurance, boarding home and adult family home costs. I sponsored all these ideas in House bills. All were in the Senate bill we passed. Thank you Pierce County seniors for helping me advocate for tax relief! I voted **YES**.



✓ Quality Home Care.

We have a duty to respect seniors and the dedicated home-care workers who enable seniors to receive needed long-term care in the comfort of their own homes. I was honored to sponsor and vote **YES** for the new law that respects the public's home-care initiative (I-777) by providing 50¢-per-hour raises and investing in health benefits for care workers. My legislation also helps taxpayers avoid higher costs for nursing home care.

✓ Honoring school-district levies.

I voted **YES** to protect local school-levy revenues previously approved by voters from losses due to 2003 state budget cuts. Our success protects \$1,166,000 of voter-approved funds for Puyallup schools, \$206,000 for Fife schools, over \$2.5 million for Tacoma schools, and \$178,000 in levy equalization for Bethel schools.

✓ Education reform.

Parents will like the next steps we took in education reform, which focus on helping students succeed. New improvements will: (a) give parents better and earlier information on their children's progress; (b) require academic standards to be clarified and prioritized; (c) allow students up to four tries to achieve higher standards needed for graduation starting in 2008; (d) create alternative assessments for special education students. I voted **YES**.



✗ Charter schools.

The Legislature authorized creation of 45 charter schools. I voted **NO** because state voters have twice rejected charter schools and we should not be creating dozens of new charter schools when regular public schools are so badly underfunded. Lawmakers still haven't fully funded the class-size reduction and teacher-salary initiatives approved by voters in 2000! I received many emails, letters, and calls from you on this issue and the overwhelming response to charter schools was **NO**.

✓ Supplemental budget.

I voted **YES** for the 2004 supplemental budget. This "no new taxes" budget sees to critical needs that suffered during the budget crisis of 2003. Highlights include:

- Adding 3,000 college enrollments.
- Saving health insurance for 20,000+ low-income children.
- Increasing community health clinics funding by 25%.
- \$16.6 million to help hospitals cope with uncompensated care.
- Improving health benefits for school employees.
- Restoring local mental-health services cut in 2003.

✓ Saving Puyallup farmland.

Great news! Our efforts to save critical farmland near the Puyallup Agricultural Research station were successful! Washington State University has agreed for the "foreseeable future" to refrain from selling the 22 acres of prime farmland—and to focus instead on doing research at the site. We also secured \$500,000 to support WSU agricultural research. I voted **YES** for this funding, of course. Many Democrats and Republicans supported my efforts, so this was truly a bipartisan victory.



✓ Security guard training.

A local owner of a security guard business asked me to sponsor legislation to require increased training for private security guards. With the security-guard industry's support, my proposal to increase required training passed unanimously. Additional hours will be added in future years. I voted **YES**. This is a good example of how many of the best ideas for laws come from local citizens. Let me know if you have an idea for a law!

✓ Helping military families.

Military families deserve our support! I sponsored and voted **YES** for legislation to: (1) create a state Military Family Assistance Fund, and (2) prevent property foreclosures or penalties on delinquent taxes for military personnel serving in Operation Enduring Freedom. Despite 96-0 House support, the bills stalled in the Senate. I'll keep working on these and other ideas for helping military families!



✓ Reducing domestic violence.

In response to the horrifying tragedy where a Tacoma police chief killed himself and his wife in front of their children, we passed new laws to reduce domestic violence. These laws create fines for domestic violence offenses to fund prevention and victim protection efforts, add \$2 million for shelters and services, and require law enforcement agencies to have policies regarding claims of officer-involved domestic violence. I voted **YES**.

✓ Closing down meth labs.

I promised you I would work with law enforcement to find an answer to the meth labs epidemic in Pierce County and Washington. I kept my promise by sponsoring and voting **YES** for a new law that sharply restricts volume sales of the chemicals used to make methamphetamine. The Legislature passed a similar Senate bill.



✓ Respectful language.

I'm pleased the Legislature decided to eliminate disrespectful language in state statutes referring to individuals with disabilities. It costs nothing to replace misleading labels with language that respects people as individuals while being mindful of challenges they face. I was a sponsor of this legislation, and voted **YES**.

✓ Affordable medicines from Canada.

It's outrageous that Americans pay twice as much or more for exactly the same medicines you can buy cheaply in Canada. I sponsored and voted **YES** for legislation to *save state taxpayers over \$300 million* annually by allowing state agencies to buy affordable medicines from Canada. The measure would also have helped private citizens to get medicines from Canada. Unfortunately, it died in the Senate.



✓ Helping doctors.

Doctors need help to cope with rising malpractice insurance costs. The House passed 18 bills (many of which I sponsored) to help and proposed \$30 million of immediate relief for doctors in the budget. I voted **YES** on all these proposals, and was very disappointed that nearly all of them died in the Senate. I will continue listening to doctors and working for a solution to this difficult problem.

State Representative
Dawn Morrell

2004 Session Final Report